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HUDSON-FULTON CELEBRATION

1609-1807-1909

COHOES

(CHAHOOS)

N.Y.

1909

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CITY OF COHOES

Hudson-Fulton Celebration

October 10 and 11, 1909

WHERE HUDSON'S VOYAGE ENDED

AN INQUIRY

COHOES, AND THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME

By HARRY MONTFORD SWEET

HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

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HENRY HUDSON

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HUDSON'S FURTHEST POINT NORTH ON THE RIVER THAT BEARS HIS NAME

IN this year of our Lord 1909, we hear much about the "Hudson-Fulton Celebration" from writers who fill us with historic lore concerning the lower reaches of the Hudson, Manhattan Island, New Amsterdam and the building by Holland and the reception in New York of a replica of De Halve Maene; and back in our earliest school histories we learned about the entrance into New York harbor, three hundred years ago, of the wonderful little yacht commanded by Henry Hudson, and his memorable cruise up the River of the Mountains, and later we have enjoyed Clerk Juet's diary of every morning whether it were "faire weather" or "mystie, untill the sunne arose." And when he "sayled twelve leagues," and had five fathoms, with the "river full of fish," our ecstacy was unbounded. But,

> "At five of the clocke in the afternoone,"
> When "the wind came to south southwest.
> So wee made a boord or two, and anchored."

we began to feel suspicious; for the phraseology and the rhythm were so like a fragment of one of Dibdin's sea songs that it began to dawn upon us that we were being fed salt-water literature to the exclusion of historical facts relating to the furthest point north on the Hudson where at least five of the crew of the Half Moon, if not all, were privileged to land. From this spot, hallowed by three centuries of ever-changing activities, embracing the age of discovery, the Dutch and English colonial period with its attendant French and Indian wars, the American Revolution, the times of pastoral ease and finally the strenuous commercial life of to-day, the city of Cohoes greets you — Cohoes, the "Spindle City" of New York State, the early home of the historic Mahican, Mohican or Mohegan Indians, a branch of the great Algonquin race and later, by conquest, the eastern portal of the Long House of the Iroquois confederacy. Here on the Hudson — the Mahicanituck of the Mahicans, the Cohohatatea of the Iroquois, the Shatemuc of the lower River Indians, called the River of the Mountains by Hudson,

Mauritius, Nassau, Orange and North River by the Dutch and lastly Hudson's River by the English — is situated Cohoes with a frontage of nearly two miles; here on the Hudson, at the mouth of the Mohawk, where in 1609, they skirted

. . . . . "the sills of green-clad hills,
And meadows white with mist —
But alas! the hope and the brave, brave dream!
For rock and shallow bar the stream;
'O Pilot, can this be the strait that leads to the Eastern sea?'
'Nay, Captain, nay; 'tis not this way; turn back we must,' said he."

will officially end the grand pageant commemorative of two great events that enter largely into the evolution of humanity; the one the discovery of the Hudson and the consequent settlement of New York State and the other the practical adaptation of steam to the art of navigation.

The claims of Cohoes as a participant in the group of cities that are connected with Hudson's achievement were so clear that the Commission had no hesitancy in conceding them, and on July 28th they by resolution set apart Sunday and Monday, October 11th and 12th, for the final days of the great celebration, in this city; and of the appropriateness of this action there can be no question.

The story of the beginnings of Hudson's quest for a passage to the China seas as formulated by the Dutch East India Company is familiar to every one, and need form no part of our narrative. What we are concerned with is the movements of the Half Moon on the river that bears the great Captain's name and our relation to that event.

The question how far the Half Moon came up the Hudson is a difficult one to answer because of the limited amount of historical data at our disposal. Prior to the year 1840 very little was known about the Dutch discoveries in America, but in the year 1841 John Romeyn Brodhead, an American lawyer and historian, was commissioned by the State Legislature to act as agent to procure and transcribe original documents referring to the history of the State. Mr. Brodhead spent three years searching the archives of Holland, England and France. As a result of his labors he secured upward of 5,000 manuscripts and papers and deposited them in the Secretary of State's office at Albany where they were translated and have been drawn on from time to time by Bancroft, O'Callaghan, Woodrow Wilson, John Fiske and other historians. In 1908 an exceedingly valuable collection of Holland manuscripts, known as the Van Rens-

Photographed from the Quay at Amsterdam

REPLICA OF THE HALF MOON

selaer Bowier Manuscripts, were published that shed new light on the early Dutch colonial period; most of the manuscripts having been written by the first patroon, Kiliaen Van Rensselaer. All of the above have materially aided the student of the Dutch occupation. Hudson's voyage came before the public through five or six different sources, two of them being noted more on account of the paucity of the material they contained than for throwing any particular light on the subject.

The three sources that can be termed original are: first, "The Diary of Robert Juet of Lime-House England." Juet was mate of the vessel that Hudson commanded on his second voyage when he was in the employ of the Muscovy Company of London, prior to his engagement by the Dutch company, and accompanied Hudson in the Half Moon as clerk. The unfortunate thing about the diary is that it was kept like a ship's log, greatly lacking in detail except as to the direction of the wind.

The memorable sail up the river began on the 12th of September, 1609. "In the after-noone, at two of the clocke, wee weighed, the winde being variable betweene the north and the north-west." On "the 19th it was faire and hot weather: at the floud, being neer of eleven of the clocke, wee weighed and ran higher up two leagues above the shoalds, and had no lesse water than five fathoms [thirty feet]; wee anchored, and rode in eight fathoms. The people of the country came flocking aboord, and brought us grapes and pompions [pumpkins] which wee bought for trifles. And many brought us bevers skinnes and otter skinnes, which wee bought for beads, knives, and hatchets. So we rode there all night. This was the furthest point north that the Half Moon came. Here the little vessel, looking like a huge fish with wings to the astonished natives, rode safely at anchor, entertaining and being entertained by the aborigines. On the twentieth, "in the morning, was faire weather. Our masters mate with foure men more went up with our boat to sound the river, and found two leagues above us but two fathomes of water, and the channell very narrow; and above that place, seven or eight fathoms. Towards night they returned . . ." They were busy trading the next day and on "the two and twentieth was faire weather; in the morning our masters mate and foure more of the companie went up with our boat to sound the river higher up, . . . this night at ten of the clocke, our boat returned in a showre of raine from sounding of the river; and found it to bee at an end for shipping to goe in. For they had beene up eight or nine leagues, and found but seven feet of water, and unconstant soundings." By this time Hudson had decided that it was useless to seek further in

this direction for the coveted passage to the China seas, and on the next day they started back down the river. By the fourth of October they were "out also of the great mouth of the great river," and "on the seventh day of November *stilo novo*, being Saturday, by the grace of God we safely arrived in the range of Dartmouth, in Devonshire, in the yeere 1609."

Juet, in his account of the voyage, states that they went "up the river neere to fortie-three degrees." And in his daily reckoning they traveled fifty leagues and nine miles; this would be 150 miles from the point they entered the river.

All that we have of this dairy was published in the 17th century by the Rev. Samuel Purchas, in a work entitled "Purchas; His Pilgrims."

The next account which we find, considered authentic and supposed to have been taken from the lips of Hudson himself, is Van Meteren's "Historie Der Ne'erlanden," published at the Hague in 1614. Van Meteren was for many years the Dutch Consul in London. He was the personal friend of Hudson. In fact it was through his efforts that Hudson was engaged by the Dutch for his third and most famous voyage. He states that "they sailed along the shore until they reached 40° 45′, where they found a good entrance, between two headlan's, and thus entered on the 12th of September, into as fine a river as can be found, with good anchoring ground on both sides. Their ship sailed up the river as far as 42° 40′. Then their boat went higher up. Along the river they found sensible and warlike people: whilst in the highest part the people were more friendly . . . When they had thus been about *fifty leagues* up the river, they returned on the 4th of October, and went again to sea." At last they arrived at Dartmouth, England, whence they informed their employers, who ordered them home to Holland, but the government would not allow Hudson and those of the crew who were Englishmen to serve other than their own country.

The third account is from John De Laet's "Nieuwe Werelt," published in 1625 at Amsterdam. It is supposed that De Laet had before him Hudson's own report of the voyage. Unfortunately he quoted it sparingly and the original is missing. The account states that "they at length reached a lofty promontory or headland, behind which was situated a bay which they entered and run up into a roadstead near a low sandy point, in latitude 40° 18′ . . . sailing hence they ascended a river to *nearly 43°* north latitude where it became so narrow and of so little depth that they found it necessary to return." Hudson stated that in latitude 42° 18′ he landed. This should be in the neighborhood of Newton Hook.

We have now shown all the authentic data that the student of history has at his disposal from original sources. From these meagre fragments historians attempt an analysis of Hudson's trip up the river and give the points where he anchored and had intercourse with the natives.

Brodhead thought the ship's boat went up to the Half-Moon, and it is contended by some authorities that the name is commemorative of the event. Moulton thought the boat went up as far as Stillwater, while O'Callaghan concedes that the Half Moon proceeded to a point just below Albany. John Fiske, author of "Dutch and Quaker Colonies," a most careful student of history and whose analysis should be of the highest order, says: "On the 22nd, [September] she [the Half Moon] had probably gone above the city of Troy, and the boat found only seven feet of water, so that progress was stopped."

On our own account we venture an analysis and take the reader with us to a graphic map of the Hudson in this vicinity.

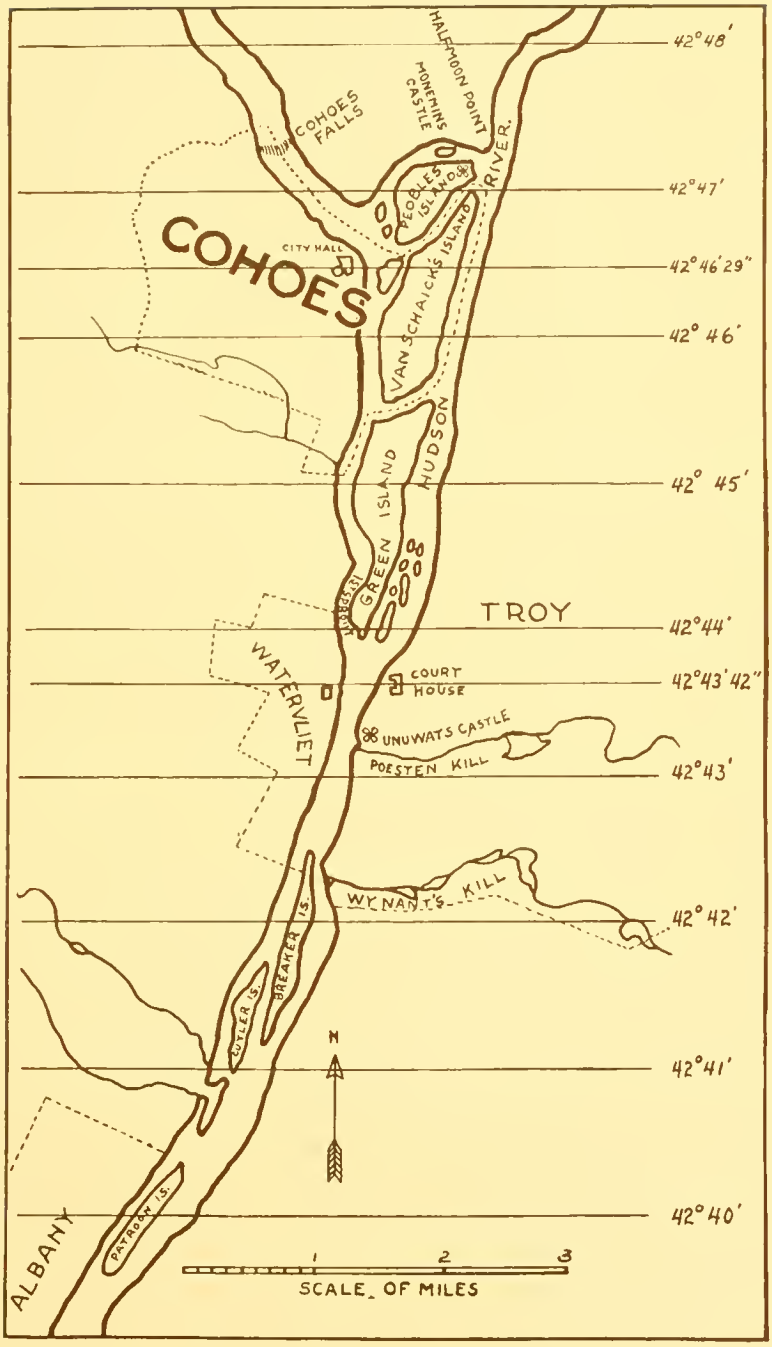
The two statements — Juet's, that the ship went to nearly 43°, and Hudson's, that the ship sailed up the river as far as 42° 40′, must both be taken *cum grano salis;* we must remember that the instruments used by navigators in Hudson's time were far from perfect.

Using the court house of each city as a basis of computation in degrees of latitude and for distances, we find the following figures useful in our deductions:

Albany	42°	30′	3″	R. R. miles from New York to Albany	143
Watervliet	42°	43′	40″	R. R. miles from New York to Watervliet	150
Troy	42°	43′	42″	R. R. miles from New York to Troy	150
Cohoes	42°	46′	29″	R. R. miles from New York to Cohoes	152
Bemis Heights Battlefield.	43°				

(These figures are approximately correct.)

Should we adopt the assumption of latitude as Juet expressed it, the vessel would have been anywhere between Cohoes and Stillwater, with the probability that the point would be in the neighborhood of the islands at the mouth of the Mohawk. On the other hand, if we accept Hudson's figures through Van Meteren's account, the vessel stopped directly opposite the center of what is known as



Map of the Hudson River in the Vicinity of Cohoes

Little Patroon Island about one mile above Albany. 43° north latitude on the Hudson is about thirty miles further north and "nearly 43°" might be from fifteen to twenty miles south of that point. If it were twenty it would be opposite Cohoes; but we shall see later that it could not be above the north sprout of the Mohawk.

As to the condition of the river at that period we must remember that it must have been considerably deeper than at the present time except where rifts cropped up near the surface. The water in the Hudson opposite Cohoes is ten feet above that at Troy owing to the State dam erected in 1821. In the 17th century the Mohawk at all four sprouts was fordable and likewise the Hudson at Half-Moon Point; the only road to the north from Albany, for nearly a hundred years, was over the islands fording the four sprouts of the Mohawk. Later when Vanderheyden's Ferry (Troy) came into existence, and New City (Lansingburgh) was a rival of the city of Albany, there was a road on the east side, and, continuing along the east bank, again crossed the Hudson by a ford at Waterford. One can readily observe from such conditions that it would be quite impossible for the Half Moon to sail above the fourth sprout of the Mohawk, so we can readily eliminate any point north of the islands above mentioned. Before the State dam was erected, sloops and schooners plied between Half-Moon Point and points down the river; for General Philip Schuyler who had extensive flax and saw mills at Saratoga (Schuylerville) drew his products to the Point when the water in the river was too low to raft them down from above, and then shipped from there to Albany.

For authority as to the river being navigable to this point we are amply provided. Localities in the early Dutch and, for that matter, in the English colonial days had no distinct line of demarcation. Limits were speculative; for example, Fort Orange was really a fort under the immediate control of the Dutch West India Company, in the village of Beverwyck. Still the locality was known by the former name. The Cahoos sometimes referred to the Falls, and the Falls referred to the entire locality along the Hudson at the mouth of the Mohawk. From the log of the ship, Rensselearwyck, sailing from Amsterdam to Fort Orange, we find the following: "1636. In the year of our Lord 1636, the 25th of September, the boat called *Rensselaers Wijck* sailed in God's name from *Amsterdam* to *texsel* [an island outside the Zuyder Zee, in Holland, where ships waited for favorable winds] at about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. God preserve Rinselaers Wick!"

They arrived "at the Manatans" March 1st, and owing to the extreme cold and the river not being free from ice they did not sail

up the river until the 26th, and they arrived at "*foert oeranien* April 7th" where they stayed, selling their goods until May 15th; then the log says:

"Fr. 15 We went with our goods to the great falls [Cohoes], four leagues above fort oeranien.

"Sat. 16 Fine weather. The wind about south.

"Sun. 17 As above.

"Mon. 18 As above.

"Tu. 19 *Maerten gerrits* went to the *manatans*. This day we unloaded our mill stones and got ready to set sail. The wind south."

For ten days the log stated: "The wind as above." And on "Sun. 31, in the morning the wind N. W. We set sail and ran past *smacks* Island and anchored there."

This is conclusive evidence that ships from Holland did actually sail from Amsterdam to Cohoes.

Again, from the "Journal of the New Netherlands, 1641-46, Hol. Doc. III." "There are three principal rivers to wit: the fresh [Connecticut], the Mauritius [Hudson] and the South [Delaware] all three reasonably wide and deep, adapted for the navigation of large ships twenty-five miles up [one Dutch equal to three English] and of common barks even to the *falls*" [Cohoes], meaning on the Hudson opposite the present site of the city.

That the Mohawks and the rest of the Five Nations came this way to trade, "carrying" around the falls we have the testimony of Father Isaac Jogues, the Jesuit martyr. In his description of the Colony of Rensselearwyck, he says: "The colony occupy two or three leagues of country. The settlement is not more than twenty leagues from the Aguiehronons [Mohawks], who can be reached either by land or water, as the river in which the Iroquois lie, falls into that of the Dutch [Hudson]; but there are many shallow rapids and a fall of a short half league where the canoe can be carried." Doc. Hist. Vol. IV, p. 20.

We also learn from documents in the Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts, an account of the "Examination of Bastiaen Jansz Crol, former director of New Netherland [also mentioned as Krankenbezoeker, Comforter of the Sick, at Fort Orange in 1626] being 39 years of age, conducted at the request of the patroon by Notary Justus Van de Ven, at Amsterdam, the 30 of June 1634." Among other questions put to him by the examiner was: "No. 10. Whether he (Crol) did not station himself with his boat in the Maquaas kil [Mohawk river] above the fort, in order to cut off the Maquaas [Mohawk] Indians from reaching Eelkins." Answer. "Yes."

This Eelkins was skipper for Hans Jorisz Honton, who was charged with illicit trading with the Indians and also of murdering one of the Sachems of the Mohawks. He was a Dutch trader sailing under English colors, and was therefore not entitled to trade on the river, the territory being in the hands of the Dutch.

At a convention held in Fort Orange, June 25, 1660, to correct abuses against the Indians, the proceedings were opened by a long speech from an Indian chief, in which he said: "Ye have included us and the Mohawks and the Mohegans in the peace of Esopus. Set now at liberty the savages ye have taken prisoners there. We are sometimes obliged to pass by that path. It is good that brothers live together in peace. The French savages meet the Mohegans near the Cahoos. This we regret." This council was held after the First Esopus war with the Indians of that neighborhood. The Dutch had called the Senecas, Mohawks and Mohegans to the council to hear the terms of the settlement; and it had resolved itself into one where they were obliged to adjust differences with the Senecas, who were members of the Iroquois confederacy. The Mohegans were relatives of the Algonquins of Canada, with whom the Iroquios were at war; hence the chieftain's regret that the Dutch allowed the Canadian Indians to come down and consult with the Mohegans — probably on Haver Island, where there had been a Mohegan stronghold prior to 1628, when the Iroquois had driven them from this section.

Saratoga or Cheragtoga was an indefinite tract of land north of the Mohawk river on the Hudson in early Dutch colonial days; but was localized by the Saratoga Patent of 1684, when its boundaries were specifically mentioned as a tract of land on both sides of the Hudson extending from Anthony's kil (the outlet of Round Lake) to the Battenkill.

Half-Moon is described as a certain plain so-called by the Dutch "situated at the third or fourth sprout of the Mohawk, with an Island between the second and third mouth."

The foreland of the Half-Moon was just south of the north line of the Manor of Rensselaer.

From *"Aboriginal Place Names of New York"* we learn that "Math-a-ke-na-ack," or the foreland of the Half-Moon, was sold in 1675; also that "Nach-te-nack"— probably the same name — was applied to the site of Waterford and the mouth of the Mohawk and is probably derived from "Nootau," fire, and the locative, meaning "Council Fire" and probably referring to the fortified Algonquin village called Moenimins Castle on Haver, or Poebles' Island.

In 1794, the Rev. Gideon Hawley of Marchpee wrote a letter containing a narrative of his journey to Onohoghgwage in 1753, now called Windsor, in Broome County, N. Y.

In this he writes: "July 31, 1794. It is forty years this day since I was ordained a Missionary to the Indians, in the Old South meeting house when the Rev. Dr. Sewall preached on the occasion, and the Rev. Mr. Prince gave the charge. I had been in the service from Feb. 5, O. S. 1752." . . . In his description of Albany, which town he passed through, he said: "It is considered as the head of navigation, although with small craft the river is navigable to Half-Moon, nine miles above it." Coming down to more recent times, the writer, in conversation with W. H. Askins, who has charge of the Sloop Lock at the State dam, and who is probably the best authority locally on matters pertaining to navigation hereabouts, was told that his informant came here in 1840 and remembered when there was twenty feet of water just below the dam at low tide; that he remembered being told about part of the dam being carried away, once in 1827 and again in 1837; that before it was repaired 100-ton schooners sailed through the breach and went up to Waterford. He well remembered Whale Island, then called Goose Island, on account of the number of domestic geese that resorted thither, of which nothing remains but a bar covered with eel grass to mark its site. It was directly opposite the city of Cohoes, east of the south end of Van Schaick's Island, and was described by Adrian Van der Donck in his "Description of the New Netherland" in connection with his remarks about the fish found in the Hudson. "I cannot refrain," he says, "although somewhat out of place to relate a very singular occurrence, which happened in the month of March, 1647, at the time of a great freshet caused by the fresh water flowing down from above, by which the water of the river became nearly fresh to the bay, when at ordinary seasons the salt water flows up from twenty to twenty-four [Dutch] miles from the sea. At this season two whales, of common size, swam up the river forty miles, from which place one of them returned and stranded about twelve miles from the sea, near which place four others stranded the same year. The other run further up the river and grounded near the great Chahoos falls, about forty-three miles from the sea. This fish was tolerably fat, for, although the citizens of Rensselaerwyck broiled out a great quantity of train oil, still the whole river — the current being still rapid — was oily for three weeks, and covered with grease. As the fish lay rotting the air was infected with its stench to such a degree that the smell was offensive and perceptible for two miles to leeward. For what purpose those whales ascended the river so far,

it being at the time full forty miles from all salt or brackish water, it is difficult to say, unless their great desire for fish, which was plenty at this season, led them onward."

Mr. Askins said that two islands below the dam, known as "Pompey" and "Hay" Islands, the latter containing six acres and partially covered with large cottonwoods, have been entirely swept away by freshets. "Many a time," said he, "have I sat on a stump of one of those old trees that was four foot through and fished in deep water." Now nothing remains but a gravelly, barren waste at low water. The tide rises here from one to three and a half feet, the maximum being when there is a stiff south wind. This year the river is the lowest he ever remembered it to be.

From the foregoing we deduce the following: That vessels larger than the Half Moon have been up at least a quarter of a mile above the present limits of the city of Cohoes, Peobles' Island to the north of Van Schaick's having been until the year 1888 in the municipal boundaries of the city, but in that year taken from Albany County and incorporated into Saratoga County by an act of the Legislature; that from both of Juet's statements in latitude and miles the Half Moon came well within the boundaries of the city; and that from one statement of Hudson's the ship's boat must have been here, and from the other the vessel herself. It follows that we are far from the improbable when we assert, with Fiske, that the voyage of the great navigator ended here on the Hudson, or, as the Iroquois called it, Cohohatatea (the river below the cascade), opposite the site of the present city of Cohoes, with the scent of pines from Qua-he-miscos (Van Schaick's Island) in the listless air, with the dark green of the pines forming a pleasing background, and the climbing clematis in full bloom draping the alder-fringed shore, the wild grapevines hanging in festoons and reaching to the tops of the shore trees, as if they were a decoration spread in honor of the event, the water rippled in the late September sunlight by the paddles from myriad canoes filled with dusky Mohicans gazing with astonishment at the strange boat with white wings appearing to them in the offing on that "faire and hot" afternoon 300 years ago, September 19, 1609.

Of the natives, the historian of the voyage says: "The people of the countrie came flocking aboord and brought us grapes and pompions, which we bought for trifles . . . So we rode there all night. The day before, in the afternoone, our master's mate went on land with an old savage, a governor of the country; who carried him in his house and made him good cheer." Perhaps this was at Unuwats Castle on the east bank of the river at the mouth of the Poestenkill, the reputed birthplace of Uncas. The next day, which

QUACHE MS COS (VAN SCHAICK'S ISLAND AND CITY FROM THE HUDSON RIVER

was the 19th, they "ran higher up two leagues." This would bring them in the neighborhood of Monemins Castle on Nach-ten-nack or Peobles' Island, from which place "much people resorted aboord."

Could we but bring up from the dim past the scene that night, three centuries ago, when the ship's "boat returned in a showre of raine" and watched the face of the explorer as the mate of the Half Moon explained, through an interpreter to Hudson, that the river was "at an end for shipping to goe in," our disappointment would have been as keen as was that of the great captain. He had the backing of the richest corporation on earth; he had important advice, maps and books from various friends, and certain letters "which his friend, Captain John Smith, had sent him from Virginia, and by which he informed him that there was a sea reaching into the western ocean by the north of the English colony (Jamestown)" and now all his superior knowledge and equipment was for nought. Was this China sea business by the western ocean a myth after all?

Right here the character of the man became apparent. He wasted no time in idle tears, but put his ship right-about and started for home with the determination to try again for the coveted honor. On the 23d of September he weighed anchor and with everything all trim he sailed out of the lower bay on the 4th of October into "the mayne sea." His crew was a motley lot of Dutch and English, mutinous to a dangerous degree. While at sea they held counsel together but could not agree. The mate wanted to winter in Newfoundland and to search the northwestern passage through Davis Strait. Hudson was opposed to this, being afraid of his crew. He proposed to sail for Ireland and winter there, which they all agreed to do, but, instead, they went to Dartmouth. Hudson reported to his employers through Van Meteren, the Dutch Consul, and offered to leave for the northwest toward the end of March, 1610, after fitting out, and suggested changing six or seven of the crew who were unruly; but he felt he must have 1,500 florins to purchase supplies. It took a long time for the report to reach the East India Company; then they ordered the ship and crew home. Hudson was about to comply, when the English government decided not to allow him to leave the country except under the English flag.

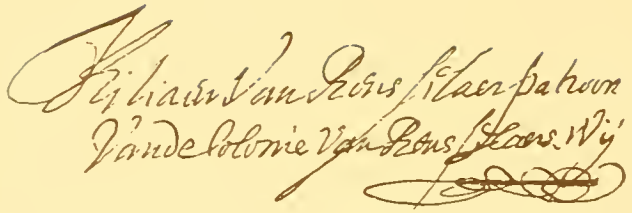
Later Hudson sailed for the northwest passage under English auspices. After sailing into Hudson's Bay the crew mutinied and left him, together with a youthful son and seven others, in one of the ship's boats and returned to England. One of the crew confessed and an expedition was sent in search of Hudson and his companions, but no trace of them was ever discovered.

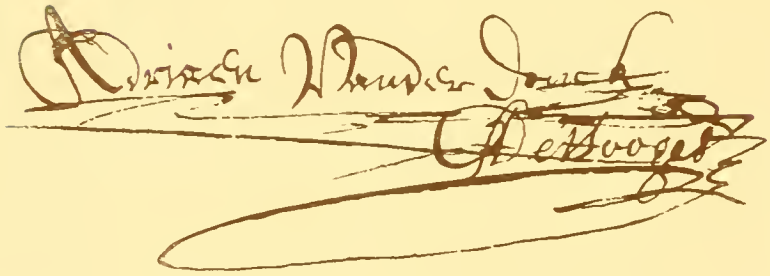
The Cohoes Falls

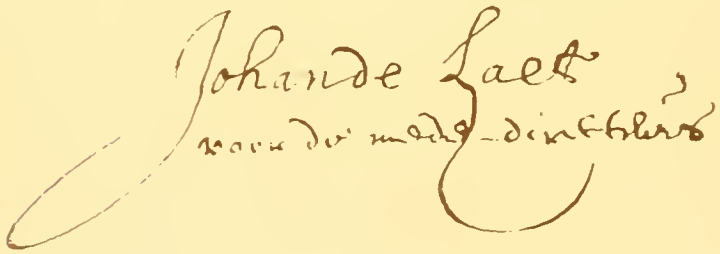
COHOES, AND THE MEANING OF THE NAME

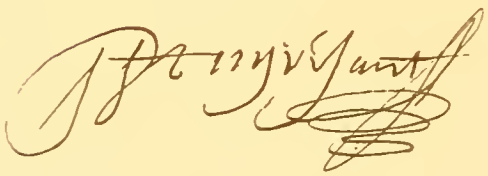
APPARENTLY the first historical mention of the place named Cohoes is made in a letter written by Killian Van Rensselaer to Direk Cornelisz Duyster, July 20, 1632, who was *commis* at Fort Orange when the patroon wrote him as follows: "Kindly do me the favor to have Albert Dieterinck (surveyor) or someone else some day pace off the farm lands from Moenemins Castle to the falls and from the falls to the pine wood lying above the islands." The castle mentioned was an Indian village at the north end of Haver or, as now known, Peobles' Island, and the pine woods was in that portion of the city of Watervliet located in the neighborhood of Broadway and Twenty-third street, where the Erie canal enters the Hudson. The first mention of the name from which the word Cohoes is derived is in a work entitled "Description of the New Netherlands" by Adrian Van der Donck, published in 1655.

"The other arm of the North river runs by four sprouts to the great falls of the Maquas kill (Mohawk river), which the Indians named the Chahoos, and our nation the Great Falls; . . . Forty-four miles (Dutch) from the sea this North river is divided. One part by four sprouts ascends to the great falls of the Maquas kill, which is named the Chahoos . . . The other part which retains the name of the North river is navigable for boats several miles farther." The writer mentioned that the river ran through the









AUTOGRAPHS OF
KILIAEN VAN RENSSELAER
ADRIAN VAN DER DONCK
JOHN DE LAET
PETER STUYVESANT

Mohawk country and abounded with fish and that they came to trade at Fort Orange down the river in canoes made of the bark of trees. "When they come near the falls they land and carry their boats and their lading some distance below the falls and proceed on their voyage."

The Indian name of the mainland south of the mouth of the Mohawk to the pine woods above mentioned was [illegible]. Note by the translator of the Van Rensselaer Bowier manuscripts says that statements made by Killian Van Rensselaer regarding the purchase of land, which was made in 1630 from the Indians, shows that historical writers have erred in their description of the territory covered by this first purchase. Their error is distinctly traceable to [illegible] a misconception on the part of Jan Babtist Van Rensselaer as to the location of the tract referred to at Negagonse, which he placed on the east side of the river, whereas in the "Account of the Jurisdictions" the Dutch West India Company distinctly states that they were on the west side as it extended from Peesmick, which was defined as a tract, south and north of the "mill creek," by which is meant the Normans Kill, also including West or Castle Island, and Negagonse as a tract extending up to Moenemins Castle, presumably from the north end of Castle Island, or a point just south of Fort Orange. Therefore, it is evident that the purchase embraced the land on the west side of the river from Fort Orange to the Mohawk. The earliest known map of this locality is that of one probably executed shortly after July 20, 1632, supplied from rough drafts and surveys of the colony furnished at various times by Philips Jansz van Haerlem, Crijn Fredericksz and Albert Dieterinck. The name given by the patroon to the land north of Fort Orange (Albany) to the Mohawk river was Weelijs (Wely's) Dael. This land was named for his second wife, Anna van Wely. Another portion of the territory comprising the municipality of Cohoes, and which is of greater historical interest, is what is now known as Van Schaick's Island. This island lies along the Hudson river with a frontage of more than one and a half miles. The Indian name of the island was Qua-he-mis-cos and was the Mahican (Mohican) name, the translation of which is "Long Island."

Pursuant to an article in the charter formulated by the States-General of Holland that "Whosoever shall settle any colonies out of the limits of Manhattes Island (the company reserved to itself the island of Manhattes) must satisfy the Indians of that place for the land." Philip Pietersen Schuyler and Goosen Gerretsen, residents of the village of Beaverswyck (Albany), addressed, on May 27, 1664, a petition to the Director-General and Council of New Nether-

land requesting permission to purchase from the Mahikanders a certain plain called by the Dutch the Half-Moon, situate at the third or fourth mouth of the Mohawk river, with an island between the second and third mouth." Some of the "English of Connetikot" wanted to buy the land but the Indian proprietors preferred to sell it to the petitioners and the latter wished to possess it "to keep the English away from this river." Pieter Stuyvesant, the Dutch Director-General, and the Council consented, July 10th, that year, on the condition that if the land should be found to be within the limits of Rensselaerwyck, the petitioners should acknowledge the ownership and jurisdiction of the patroon of the manor; and on the 11th of September, 1665, O. S. Itamonet, Ahemhameth and Kisho-

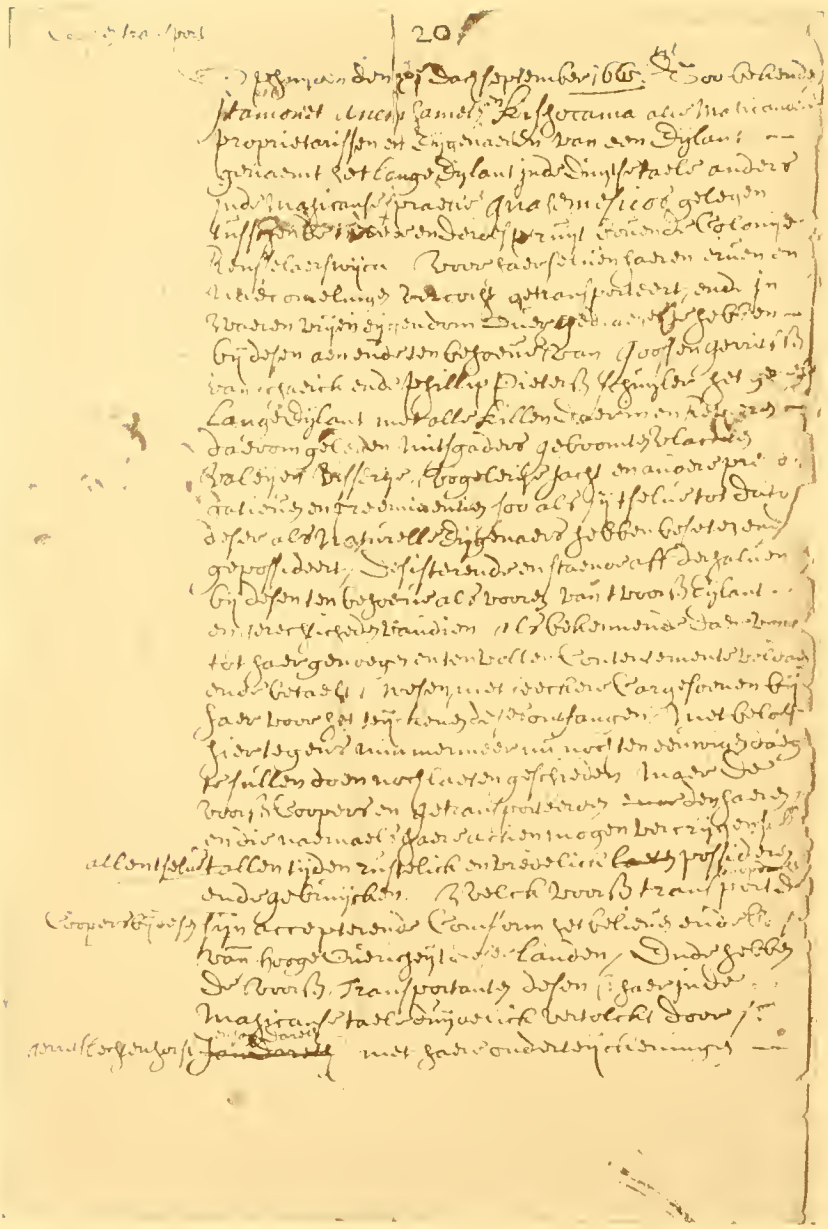
Van Schaick Manor House

cama, all Machican owners of the above island, sold and conveyed the island to the petitioners before mentioned. Goosen Gerretsen was from Westerbroeck, province of Utrecht. His name was first mentioned in the colony in 1637. He probably came by the ship Rensselaerwyck in 1636 and he was engaged by the patroon for six years, three years at *f*50 a year and three years at *f*80 a year. His wages began April 8, 1637. In 1648 he became a member of the court and was licensed to brew beer in 1649. In 1650 he was appointed a trustee of a fund with Arent van Curler for the building of a school. After 1660 he was referred to as Goosen Gerritsz van Schaick.

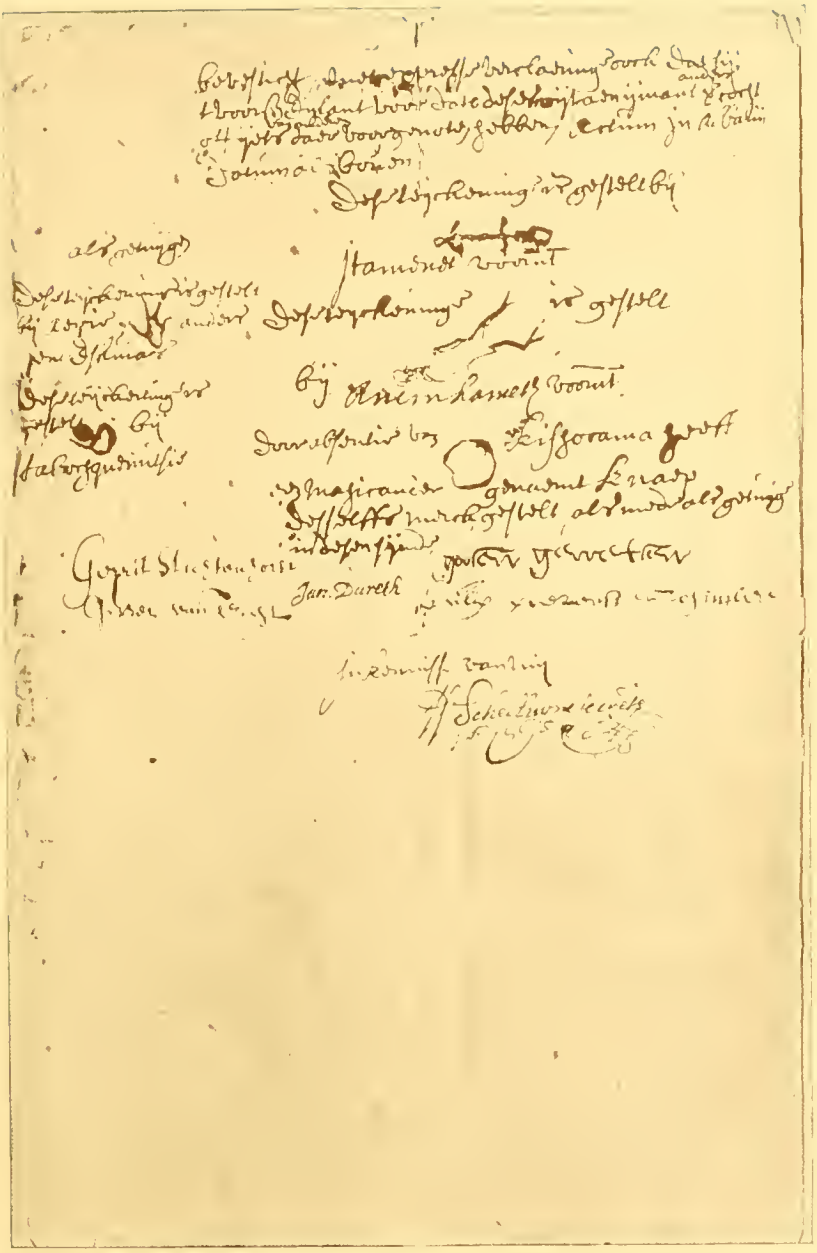
Philip Pietersen Schuyler came from Amsterdam, Holland, to America in 1650. He was the great-grandfather of General Philip Schuyler and died in Albany March 9, 1683–4, and was buried in the old Dutch Reformed Church, situated at the junction of State street and Broadway. His son, Peter, was the first Mayor of Albany.

An interesting and exceedingly able article, written by Edgar B. Nichols, Esq., entitled the "Story of Van Schaick Island," appeared in the Cohoes *Republican*, July 16, 1906.

The island directly north of Van Schaick Island, which was formerly in the municipality of Cohoes and located in Albany county, now known as Peobles' Island, together with the village of Waterford and Van Schaick Island, were all known as the foreland of the Half-Moon. Van Schaick's Island was also known as Cahose Island.



ORIGINAL INDIAN GRANT OF VAN SCHAICK'S ISLAND



The Indian Signatures with Totem Are as Follows: Itamonet and Ahemhameth. By the Absence of Kishocama, a Mahicander Named Knaep Hath Put His Mark. Aepio, Otherwise Called Eshmat Tabochquemitrid. The Dutch Signatures Are Gerrit Stechonhest, Jan Dareth, Gerrit Van Hinck, Goosen Gerretsen, Philip Pietersen Schuyler; in the Presence of W. Schellnyne, Secretarius.

ORIGIN OF PLACE NAME, COHOES

The significance of the place name, Cohoes, has been variously interpreted and in attempting to trace it we must remember that the word has been handed down to us through four distinct peoples, the Mahican, who used a dialect of the Algonquins; the Mohawks, who used a dialect of the Iroquois; and the Dutch and the English. The last two had "varying values for certain letters and their combinations." For illustration, the English Cayuga looks very different from the German Gajuka but is very like in sound. The same can be said of the French Shatacoin and the English Chatauqua. Also, the Dutch Chahoos and the English Cahose, the last syllable being pronounced like h-o-s-e in whose. Mr. L. H. Morgan, a student of Indian dialects, thought it was a Mohawk word, Ga-ha-oos, a shipwrecked canoe. Joseph Brandt, the Indian leader of the atrocious Cherry Valley massacre, who was sent in his youth by Sir Wm. Johnson to Dr. Wheelock's school in Connecticut and who afterward traveled extensively in Europe, said the Iroquois word Cah-hoos meant a canoe falling. In Masten's "History of Cohoes" he quotes from the Schenectady *Reflector* of 1857, that the name is Mohican, and that the Canadian Indians still call pitch-holes in the road *cahoos;* and Ruttenber, in his "Indian Tribes of the Hudson," says it refers to the islands and not the falls. It is a fair object of inquiry to trace its meaning, as Indians name places from their most prominent characteristic.

The two most prominent places in the region where these two tribes lived, other than Cohoes, whose names bear a close resemblance to Cohoes, are Coos in New Hampshire and Cohasset in Massachusetts, both of which words are Algonquin. The first mention of the latter word came from Captain John Smith, the hero of the Virginia Colony, in his description of New England. He visited the shores of that country in 1614 and it was then occupied by a tribe of Indians from whom he received the name of the locality. To his expert ear it sounded as spelled by him, viz., "*Quonahassit.*" The spelling has changed — first to Cono-hassit and finally to Cohasset.

The first part of the word when compared with many others is proved to be "long." It can be seen in the old spelling of Connecticut — *Quonnaticut* or *Quinnituckut*, from *Quona* "long" and *tuk*

or *ittuk*, a long tidal river. The same root with a disguised spelling is noted in Kennebeck, meaning the same. *Kenne*, *conne*, *cono*, *quono* and *quahe* are the different spellings of substantially the same Indian sounds. The second root of the word Cohasset is *hassi* from *hassun*, *assene*, *ossin*, etc., meaning rock or stone, the whole word meaning a "long-rocky-place."

Cohoes, in the evolution of the name, has traveled from *Cha-hoos*, 1645 (Von der Donck); *Cohas*, 1651; *Cohoos* (Danker & Sluyter, 1660), *Cohocs* (Memoirs of an American Lady, 1757–68), *Cahos* (Minutes of the Albany Council, 1771), *Cahoo Falls* (Gov. Wm. Tryon, 1774), *Cohoes* (Gov. Thomas Pownall, 1776), *Cohocs* (Mass. Hist. Col., 1–17), *Xohos*, corrected to *Cohocz* (Liancourt, a French traveler, 1795), *Cohoz* (Isaac Weld, 1796), *Cohos* or falls of the Mohawk (Thomas Moore, the Irish poet, 1804), *Cohoesville* (articles of incorporation of the Cohoes Manufacturing Company, the first industry that settled here, comprised exclusively of residents of Lansingburgh, who engaged in the manufacture of screws, 1811), and *Cohoes Bridge* (Spafford's Gazetteer, 1824). In 1832, with the advent of the first post-office, the government placed a permanent name on the hamlet — for it could be called nothing else — and from that time Cohoes has been the name of our abiding place.

But to return to the place name, Cahoos, from an Algonquin standpoint:

Coos or Cowass = The white pine.
Cossayuna = "Lake at our pines" or "pine lake."
Co = for object.
Os = loose stone.
Ossin or assin = a stone.

Keeping in mind that, in the Algonquin, the adjective precedes the noun, which is directly the opposite in the Iroquois, we could form a word *Quanne-coos* or *Conne-coos*, meaning the "long place of the pines," or *Co-os*, "place of stones." Obviously this is far from a satisfactory solution of the place name Cahoos, and while there were abundant groves of pine and plenty of long rocky places in this section, they could hardly be prominent enough to warrant the application of such minor features to represent a locality abounding with manifestly greater peculiarities; and so we feel obliged to dismiss the idea of an Algonquin origin.

After 1628 the Iroquois invasion and occupation followed the Algonquins and the Dutch came more in contact with the former nation, and it was after this that we first hear of the name *Cha-hoos* or *Cahoos*.

The following Iroquois words will help in the analysis either in building or eliminating:

a-ta-te-a = river.
ca-hoon-ge or ka-hon-ji = black.
ga-hu-wa = canoe.
co = cascade.
Co-ho-ha-ta-te-a or Cahohatatea = river below the cascade (the Hudson).
io = beautiful.
co-io = beautiful falls.

These examples of Iroquois words are from Ruttenber's "Indian Tribes of the Hudson." In one of the dialects of the Iroquois, according to Sir William Johnson, he states that their language, "though not very wordy, is extremely emphatic . . . The article is contained in the noun by varying the termination; and the adjective is combined into one word. Thus: *Caghyunghaw*, is a creek; *Caghungha*, is a river; *Caghyunghaowana*, is a great river, and *Caghyungheco*, a fine river." The prefix *ca* evidently denoting water in motion.

It would seem from the foregoing that we could safely venture that the name of Cohoes is of Iroquois origin, and the meaning is "below the falls."

This solution would harmonize with the earliest allusions to this section, as at times the locality called the Cahoos was meant for the islands; at other times for the north and south sides of the Mohawk and the west shore of the Hudson along the rock isles at the mouth of the Mohawk.

The Gorge Below the Falls

Henry Hudson

103 W

CITY OF COHOES INCORPORATED
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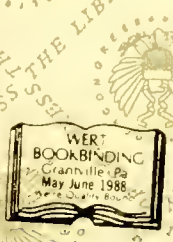

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